

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 039954

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS FOR AMB YOUNG FM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 0752 ACTION STATE WHITE HOUSE FEB 15.

QUOTE S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 0752

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

WHITE HOUSE FOR DAVID AARON FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, OCLR, ET, SO, US

SUBJECT: FONMIN WELCOMES EMISSARY, TURNS DOWN MILITARY AIRCRAFT

REF: (A) ADDIS ABABA 0741; (B) ADDIS ABABA 0748

1. I WAS GRANTED MEETING WITH FONMIN FELLEKE MORNING
FEB 15 WITHIN HALF HOUR OF MAKING MY REQUEST. DRAWING
ON INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL AND EXTENSIVE QUOTATIONS IN
TODAY'S PRESS FROM MENGISTU'S PRESS CONFERENCE, I EX-
PRESSED US CONCERN OVER ETHIOPIAN INTENTIONS IN RECEIV-
ING EMISSARY AND DENIED CATEGORICALLY THAT US IS PRO-
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VIDING DIRECT OR INDIRECT MILIARY ASSISTANCE TO
SOMLIA IN ANY WAY. I CHARACTERIZED MENGISTU REFER-
ENCE TO NEUTRON BOMB AS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE INSERTION OF
UNRELATED ISSUE INTO ALREADY SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS REGARD-
ING US PURPOSES IN HORN. I SINGLED OUT MENGISTU QUOTE
TO EFFECT THAT IF US, BRITISH AND FRG CONTINUE THEIR
CURRENT POLICES, "MAINTAINING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

WITH THEM BECOMES TOTALLY MEANINGLESS." SUCH STATEMENTS, I SAID, CAST DOUBT AS TO WHETHER EMISSARY'S TALKS HERE COULD BE FRUITFUL.

2. FELLEKE ASSURED ME THAT MENGISTU'S EXPRESSION OF ETHIOPIAN CONCERN IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUESTIONS DID NOT CHANGE ETHIOPIA'S STRONG DESIRE TO WELCOME PRESIDENTIAL EMISSARY AND CONDUCT SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM. CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE NOT ATTRIBUTABLE TO ETHIOPIA, WHICH WANTS RELATIONS TO CONTINUE NORMALLY. AT SAME TIME, FELLEKE SAID HE HAD TRIED DURING MY LAST MEETING WITH HIM (DEC 22) TO BRING TO US NOTICE FACT THAT IF US PERSISTED IN MOBILIZING CERTAIN ILL-DISPOSED QUARTERS AGAINST ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION, SUCH BEHAVIOR COULD NOT HELP TO AFFECT TRADITIONAL RELATIONS.

3. FELLEKE SAID THAT IN EARLY STAGES OF WAR WHEN ETHIOPIA ASKED CERTAIN COUNTRIES FOR ARMS, US HAD INTERVENED TO PREVENT SUCH ARMS SHIPMENTS. HE CITED YUGOSLAVIA AS CASE IN POINT. ETHIOPIA DID NOT OBJECT, GIVEN US POSITION NOT TO PERMIT US ARMS TO GO TO EITHER BELLIGERENT. NOW, HOWEVER, WHEN COUNTRIES LIKE IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, PAKISTAN AND OTHERS HAVE PUBLICLY STATED THEIR SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA AND REALIZATION OF HER AMBITIONS IN ETHIOPIA, US TAKES NO ACTION TO PREVENT
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IRAN AND REST FROM CARRYING OUT THESE HOSTILE ACTS. DESPITE FACT THAT REGULAR SOMALIA TROOPS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN FIGHTING ON ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY FROM OUTSET OF WAR, US HAS FAILED TO CONDEMN AGGRESSION. EVEN WHEN SECRETARY VANCE CALLED FOR SOMALI WITHDRAWAL LAST WEEK, HE LINKED IT WITH UNACCEPTABLE CALL FOR SIMULTANEOUS WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY ADVISORS FROM ETHIOPIA. US SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT, IN LIGHT OF ITS OWN REFUSAL TO PROVIDE ARMS, ETHIOPIA, HAVING NO FACTORIES OF ITS OWN, MUST GO TO OTHER COUNTRIES FOR ITS URGENT NEEDS. NEW WEAPONS REQUIRE TRAINING, AND IT WAS LOGICAL FOR FRIENDLY SUPPLIER COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE PERSONNEL FOR THAT PURPOSE. JUST AS NO AMERICAN ADVISORS HAD PULLED TRIGGERS IN 1964 WAR, NO FOREIGNERS WOULD DO ETHIOPIA'S FIGHTING TODAY. SUCH PRETEXTS AND CONFUSING AND HARMFUL STATEMENTS DAMAGED BILATERAL RELATIONS. ETHIOPIA WANTS RELATIONSHIP MAINTAINED, WANTS TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS, AND FOR THESE REASONS CHAIRMAN HAD DECIDED TO RECEIVE SPECIAL EMISSARY WITH UTMOST GOOD WILL.

4. FELLEKE SAID THAT WITHOUT CONVICTION THAT ETHIT ETHIOPIAN

CAUSE IS JUST AND THAT ITS ACCUSATIONS WERE CORRECT, EPMG WOULD NOT HAVE INVITED INTERNATIONAL PRESS DURING PAST WEEK. JOURNALISTS HAD BEEN TO FRONT AND HAD SEEN ENORMOUS QUANTITIES OF CAPTURED SOMALI ARMS, MAJORITY OF WHICH WERE OF US OR NATO ORIGIN. EMBASSY COULD SEE THEM, TOO, IF IT WISHED. MEANWHILE, NEWSWEEK WAS REPORTING THAT UK AND FRG WERE AIRLIFTING ARMS TO SOMALIA. THERE WERE ALSO REPORTS OF AMERICAN MERCENARIES. IF ANY SUCH MERCENARIES CAME TO FIGHT, EPMG WOULD NOT TREAT THEM AS INDIVIDUALS, BUT WOULD SEE USG AS DIRECTLY IMPLICATED. AS FOR US PEACE INITIATIVE, IF US COULD USE ITS INFLUENCE TO PERSUADE SOMALIS TO WITHDRAW, ETHIOPIA WOULD BE HAPPY TO SHOW WORLD ITS DESIRE FOR LASTING PEACE IN REGION.

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5. I WELCOMED FELLEKE'S INDICATION THAT EMISSARY SHOULD COME. SAYING THAT RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO REBUT ALL OF CHAIRMAN'S ACCUSATIONS NOW AND DISCUSS FONMIN'S EXPOSITION, IT SEEMED PREFERABLE TO LEAVE SUCH ISSUES UNTIL ARRIVAL OF EMISSARY. I POINTED OUT THAT SECRETARY'S FEB 10 PROPOSALS DID NOT REFER TO TIMING OR PRIORITIES. US RECOGNIZED THAT SOMALIA WAS ATTACKING ETHIOPIA. WE FAVOR SOMALIA WITHDRAWAL AND WERE NOT COMING TO HER HELP. I ASKED FOR FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT ETHIOPIA HAD CAPTURED US-MADE ARMS. TO MY REQUEST, FELLEKE THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR EMBASSY OFFICERS TO VIEW WEAPONS ON SPOT. I REPLIED THAT SINCE USG IS TRYING TO GET FACTS, EMBASSY WOULD CERTAINLY BE WILLING TO TAKE HIM UP ON OFFER.

6. I SAID THAT MY MANDATE IN COMING TO ETHIOPIA WAS TO RESTORE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF THE GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE PAST. AT SAME TIME, PUBLIC STATEMENTS DO AFFECT THAT RELATIONSHIP. MENGISTU'S STATEMENT QUESTIONING CONTINUED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD CERTAINLY BE HIGHLIGHTED IN WORLD PRESS. THERE WAS NO CONCERTED US PLAN AGAINST ETHIOPIA, NO US CONSPIRACY WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, AND NO DESIRE ON PRESIDENT'S PART TO ORCHESTRATE AGGRESSION. US WISHED EARLY END TO WAR ON BASIS OF SOMALI WITHDRAWAL AND ETHIOPIAN TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. WITH THESE AIMS IN MIND, I EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT EMISSARY VISIT WOULD SERVE CONSTRUCTIVE PURPOSE. I ALSO SAID THAT US STANDS FIRMLY BEHIND OAU EFFORTS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT AND THAT IF OAU TAKES FIRM POSITION REGARDING SPECIFIC NATURE OF LONG-RANGE SOLUTION, US SHOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM SUPPORTING OAU.

7. AT END OF DISCUSSION, BERHANE DERESSE RAISED WITH MINISTER QUESTION OF CLEARANCE FOR US GOVERNMENT AIRPLANE ON WHICH SPECIAL EMISSARY PLANNED TO ARRIVE FEB 16. FELLEKE

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REPLIED THAT IF CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT INVOLVED, IT WOULD BE
WELCOMED. IF, HOWEVER, MILITARY PLANE USED, SECURITY
MEASURES REQUIRED WOULD MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO AUTHORIZE
FLIGHT TO ADDIS ABABA ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. SUBSEQUENT REVER-
SAL OF THIS POSITION HAS BEEN COMMUNICATED REFTEL B.
MATHERON
UNQUOTE VANCE

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